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"THERMOPYLAE"

Dimitri Hadzi, Sculptor

The 16-foot high, 2-1/2 ton bronze sculpture, "Thermopylae" by Dimitri Hadzi, was inspired by "Profiles in Courage" and the brilliant war record of President John F. Kennedy and is named after the Greek battle where the Spartans, in a display of great courage, fought the Persians to the last man.

Thoroughly symbolic in its abstract shapes, basically organic in form, the heavy forms contrast with thin, solid with open, vertical with horizontal, and round with angular. Through the effect of the sun, rain, and snow on the sculpture, the viewer will be provided with everchanging visual and emotional experiences in its proposed location on the south side of the Twin Towers where it will become part of the Government Center, as envisaged in the original building design concept.

Dimitri Hadzi was born in New York of Greek heritage. Trained as a chemist, he didn't turn to sculpture until his return from duty in the South Pacific in World War II. He then studied at Cooper Union and the Brooklyn Museum Art School, and with a Fulbright Scolarship travelled to Greece in 1950 to study sculpture at the Athens Polytechneion. From Greece he went to Rome as a guest sculptor at the American Academy where he has remained since 1954. The influence of the variety of architecture and sculpture in Rome is reflected in the convoluted forms from the baroque, and the rough textures reminescent of the old buildings.

Hadzi's creation and development of the sculpture also follows the classical process into its final form. First, a lengthy series of study sketches are made to arrive at a concept followed by a small bronze model; next, a long process to half scale and finally to a full scale plaster model. From the full scale model, piece molds are made for the casting which utilizes the "lost wax" method. "Thermopylae" was cast in 20 different pieces and then carefully welded together. Hours of work devoted to producing the patina of the finished bronze have made the seams virtually invisible..

Other examples of Hadzi's sculpture are located in New York's Lincoln Center, Chase Manhattan Bank, Guggenheim Museum, Whitney Museum, Museum of Modern Art, Yale University, Princeton University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the Joseph H. Hirschhorn Collection which has been given to the U.S. Government.